

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name The Helping Hand Institute Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 523 Grand Boulevard [n/a] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties
in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR
Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this
property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 30 March 2000

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the National
Register

See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the National
Register.

[] removed from the National Register

[] other, explain see continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

contributing

noncontributing

1 0 building

0 0 sites

0 0 structures

0 0 objects

1 0 total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC: Institutional Housing

Current Functions

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH
CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

Stone

roof Asphalt

other Terra Cotta

see continuation sheet [].

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

SOCIAL HISTORY

Periods of Significance

1915-1950

Significant Dates

1915

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Rae and Lovitt, Architects /
George L. Brown and Sons, Builders

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☒ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Kansas City, Public Library
The Helping Hand of Goodwill, Kansas City, MO

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 363430	Northing 4330850	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein
organization Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C. date December 1, 1999
street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816-363-0567
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64113-0551

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name 523 Grand Properties, L.L.C.
street & number 32 Clifton Street telephone 617-776-7964
city or town Somerville state MA zip code 02144

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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The Helping Hand
Institute Building
Jackson County, MO

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SUMMARY

The Helping Hand Institute Building, located at 523 Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm of Smith, Rae and Lovitt and constructed by George L. Brown and Sons, builders, in 1915. The four-story reinforced concrete, brick and stone building is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 100 feet by 88 feet. Characterized by dominant, carved wooden brackets with acanthus leaves at the molded cornice line of the west and south façades and contrasting stone ornamentation, the building affords panoramic views of the surrounding environment. Additional two stories, designed by local architect Charles A. Smith, were planned for in 1921, but were never implemented. Located just east of the Old Town District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, The Helping Hand Institute Building is sited north of the Central Business District and Interstate I-70/I-35 loop. Light industrial and warehouse buildings are situated further east and north to the bluffs of the Missouri River. In good condition, the Helping Hand Institute Building has maintained the majority of its historic features to convey its significance. Its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association has been retained.

ELABORATION

West or Main Façade

The primary façade of the Helping Hand Institute Building measures seven bays divided by brick piers and features a centrally-placed main entrance with a molded, denticulated entablature surround. Fluted, Classically-inspired pilasters flank the double-leaf door and wide transom, both

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boarded-up for security purposes. Resting above the entrance, below the entablature, is a carved foliated stone tablet in bas-relief displaying the words "HELPING HAND INSTITUTE." A prominent, carved cartouche crowns the entrance bay. Additional carved decorative panels are displayed above and to the side (originally the location of sconces) of the pilasters.

Fenestration of the first story, separated by wide brick spandrels, features paired, fixed plate glass units with multipaned transoms set in brick surrounds with a continuous stone sill course. Transoms are paired at the end bays and tripartite at the remaining bays. Upper story fenestration is two-over-one (end bays) and three-over-one (remaining bays), double-hung, sash-type with stone lug sills. With the exception of the central bay, windows are set in pairs. An additional entrance, modified from the original with an aluminum-framed door, is located at the far north bay.

South Façade

The south façade, measuring seven bays, is articulated similarly to the main façade, with the exception of the entry bays and first story fenestration. The entrance at the second bay (counting east to west) features a double-leaf door (boarded-up) with wide transom and is set in a denticulated molded stone pediment surround. An additional entrance with a pediment surround is located at the fifth bay. Transoms of the first story window units are paired at every other bay, slightly deviating from the first story fenestration of the main façade. The easternmost transom of the third bay, as well as the unit at the first bay, is a single pane. In addition, the window unit placed above the

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entrance at the fifth bay is significantly shortened, while the upper-level transoms of the first bay are divided into four panes.

East Façade

Exhibiting a concrete structural grid, the east façade features paired, fixed plate glass windows with fixed single pane transoms and brick sills at the first through third bays (counting south to north); the unit at the seventh bay has been modified and is currently boarded-up at the base. The remaining units of the first story, fourth and fifth bays, are two-over two, double-hung, sash with brick sills; the unit at the fifth bay is partially boarded-up. An original entrance with wide transom, located at the sixth bay, has been boarded-up. Upper-story fenestration is two-over one and one-over-one, double-hung, sash with brick sills. Metal fire escapes are placed at the first and sixth bays; the former features wide, bracketed balconies while the later unit features wood-framed doors at each landing. Fenestration at the elevator shaft bay is fixed. The doors at the second and third stories display stone lintels and multipaned transoms.

North Façade

Partially obscured by the adjacent brick building, the north façade features a concrete structural grid and one-over-one, double-hung, sash fenestration with brick sills. Original windows at the second and sixth bays (moving east to west) have been replaced with fixed, plate glass units. The first floor units have been covered with plywood at the lower sash. The decorative cornice line of the main façade wraps to the corner of the north façade.

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Additional Features

Additional features of the Helping Hand Institute Building include a molded stone water table between the third and fourth stories, a decorative pent roof with terra-cotta tile at the west and south façades, and brick elevator shafts. Brick piers at the west and south facades terminate in stone bases. The west, south and north facades terminate in a parapet, with tile coping at the north façade. Basement fenestration has been infilled with brick and concrete block (at the rear façade).

Interior

There are several rooms of the original interior of the Helping Hand Institute Building that have remained intact, including the Chapel, Library (fireplace is extant), and Lounge. The main vestibule and the staircase (resurfaced) of the first floor have also been maintained. Historic materials, common to each of these areas, include wood trim and plaster.

Future Plans

Currently, there are proposed plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Helping Hand Institute Building. Plans include renovation of the fenestration, entrances and modernization of the interior to accommodate apartments. These plans are being prepared by Richard Graf, Fort Point Consulting Inc., Somerville, Massachusetts, in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The proposed plans have been approved by the Department of Natural Resources and have been forwarded to the National Park Service for review.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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Helping Hand Institute Logo, 1947



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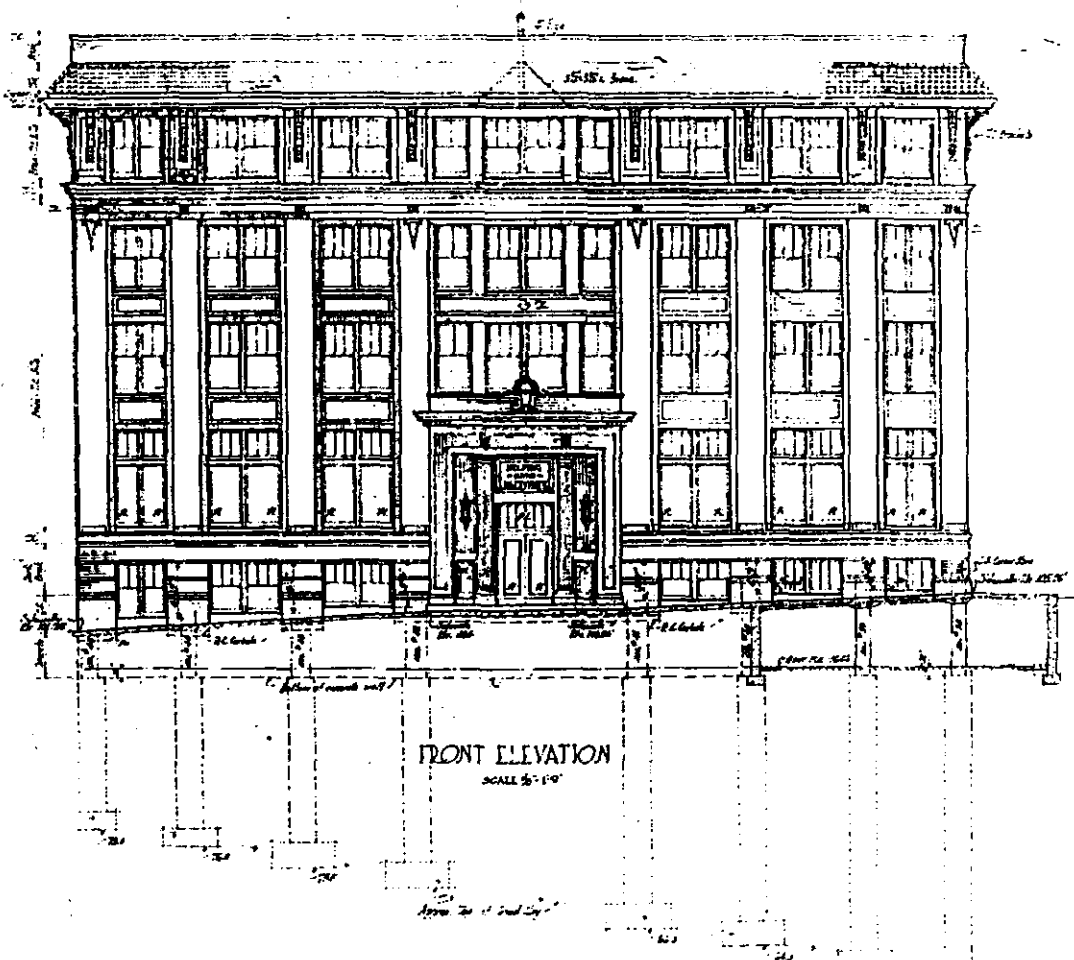
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The Helping Hand Institute, West Elevation



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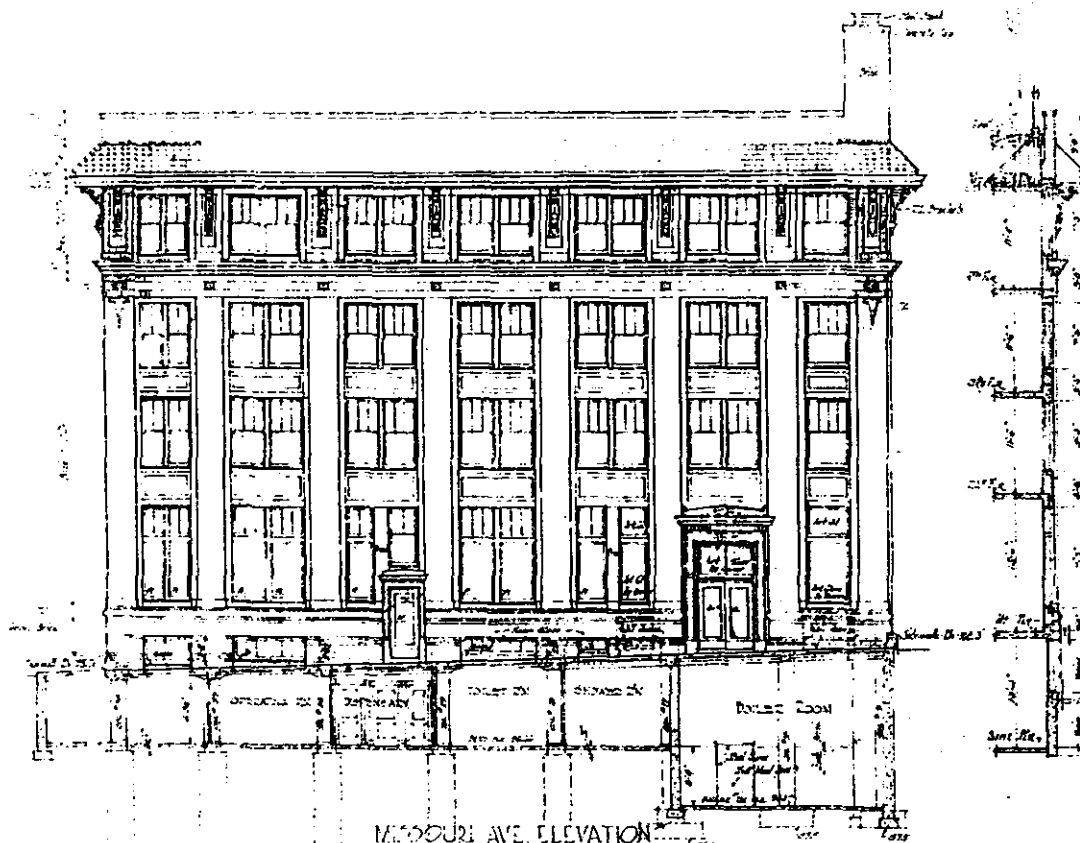
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The Helping Hand Institute, South Elevation



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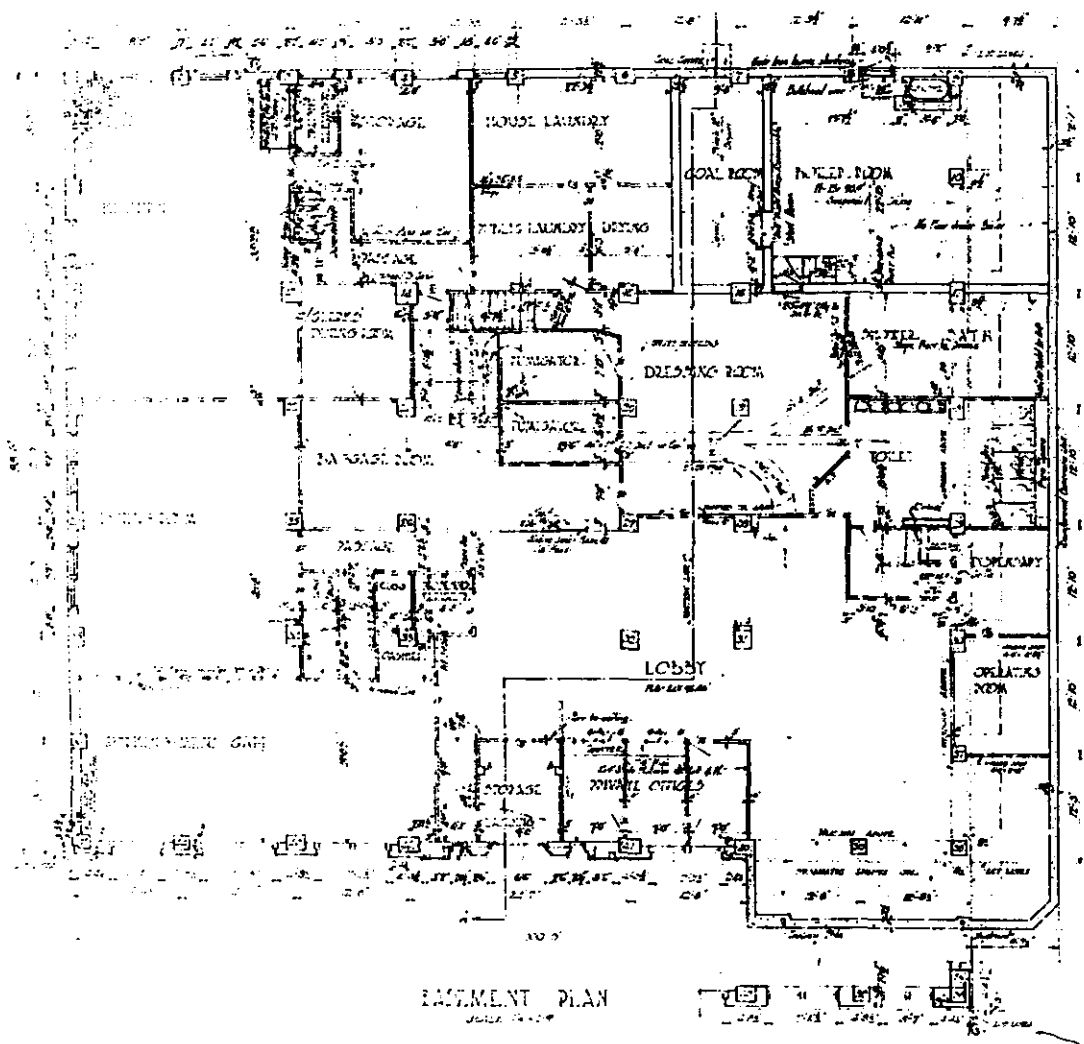
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The Helping Hand Institute, Basement Plan



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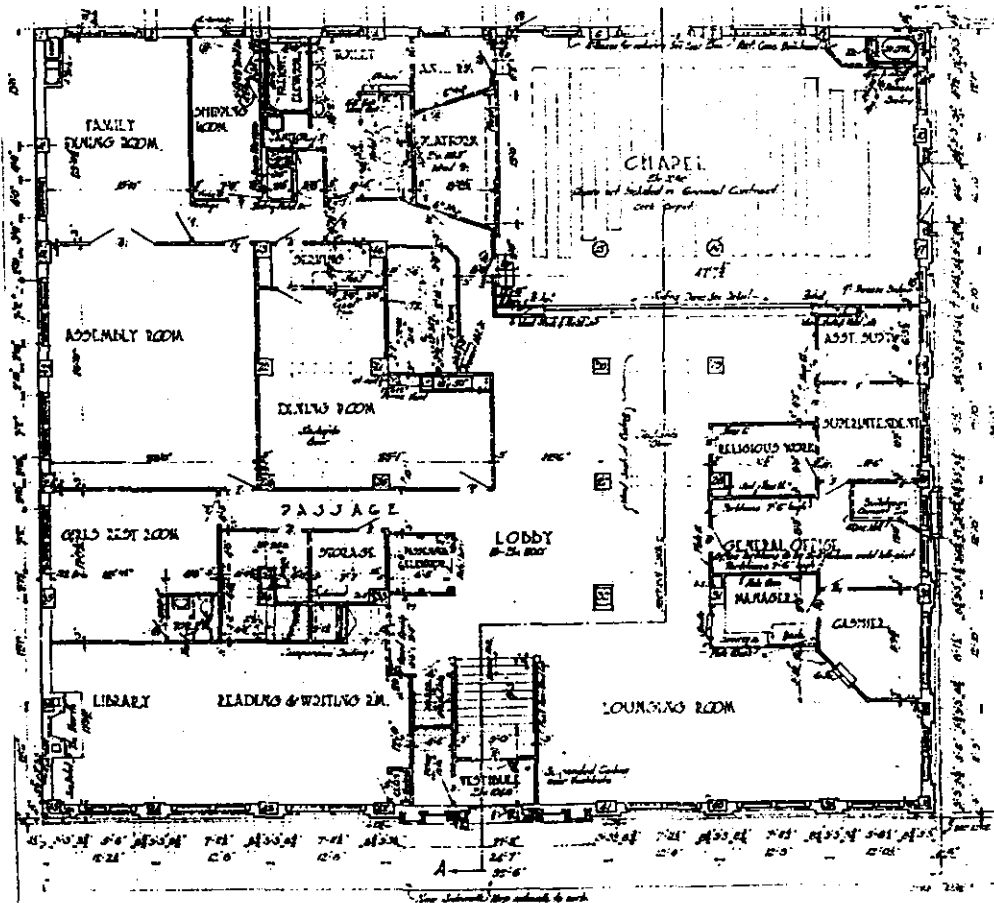
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The Helping Hand Institute, First Floor Plan



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

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The Helping Hand Institute, Lobby, ca. 1920



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The Helping Hand Institute, Recreation Room, ca. 1920



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The Helping Hand Institute, Dormitory, ca. 1930s



Photo View Co.
K.C.

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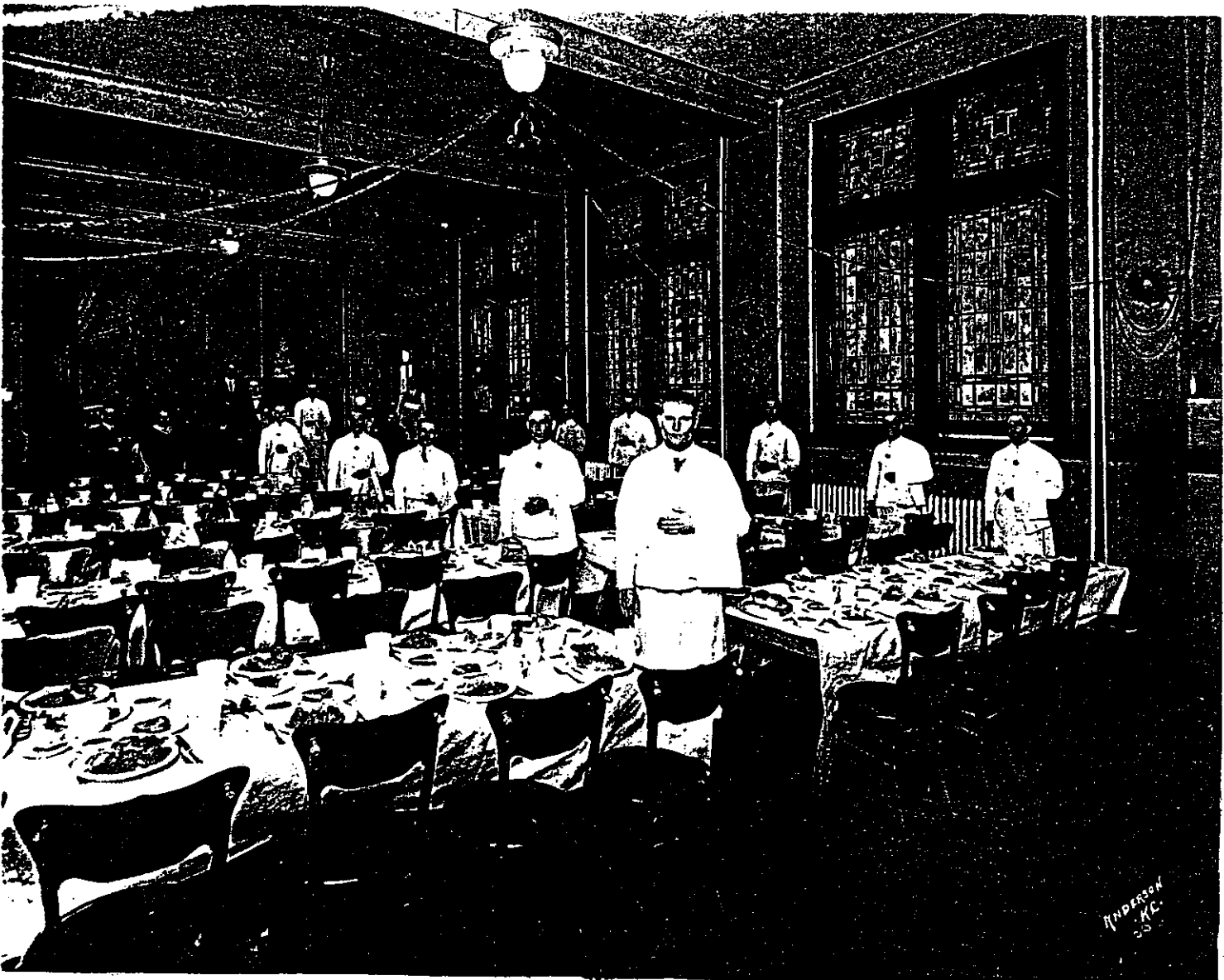
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The Helping Hand Institute, Christmas Dinner, no date



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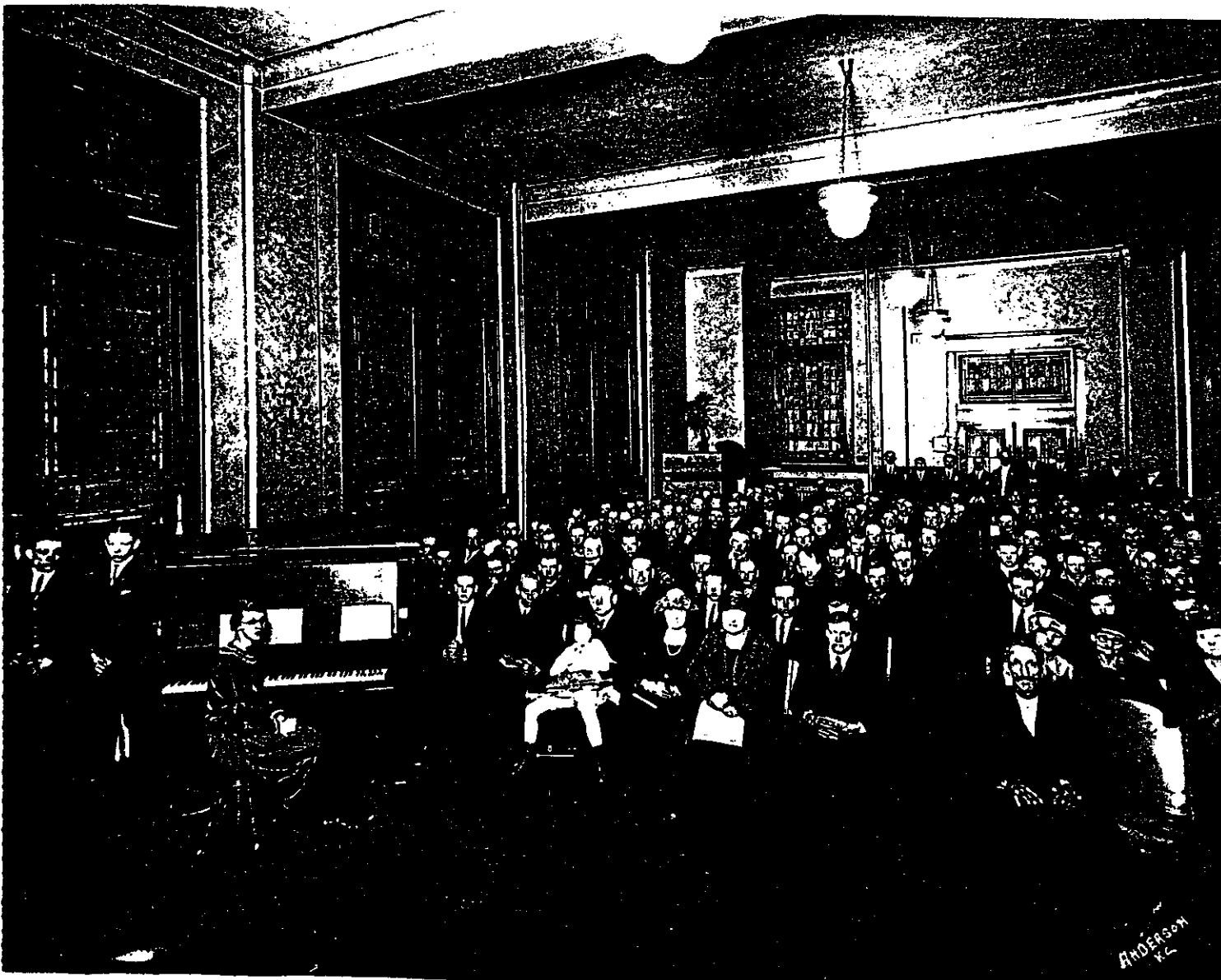
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The Helping Hand Institute, Early day services in the
Chapel, no date



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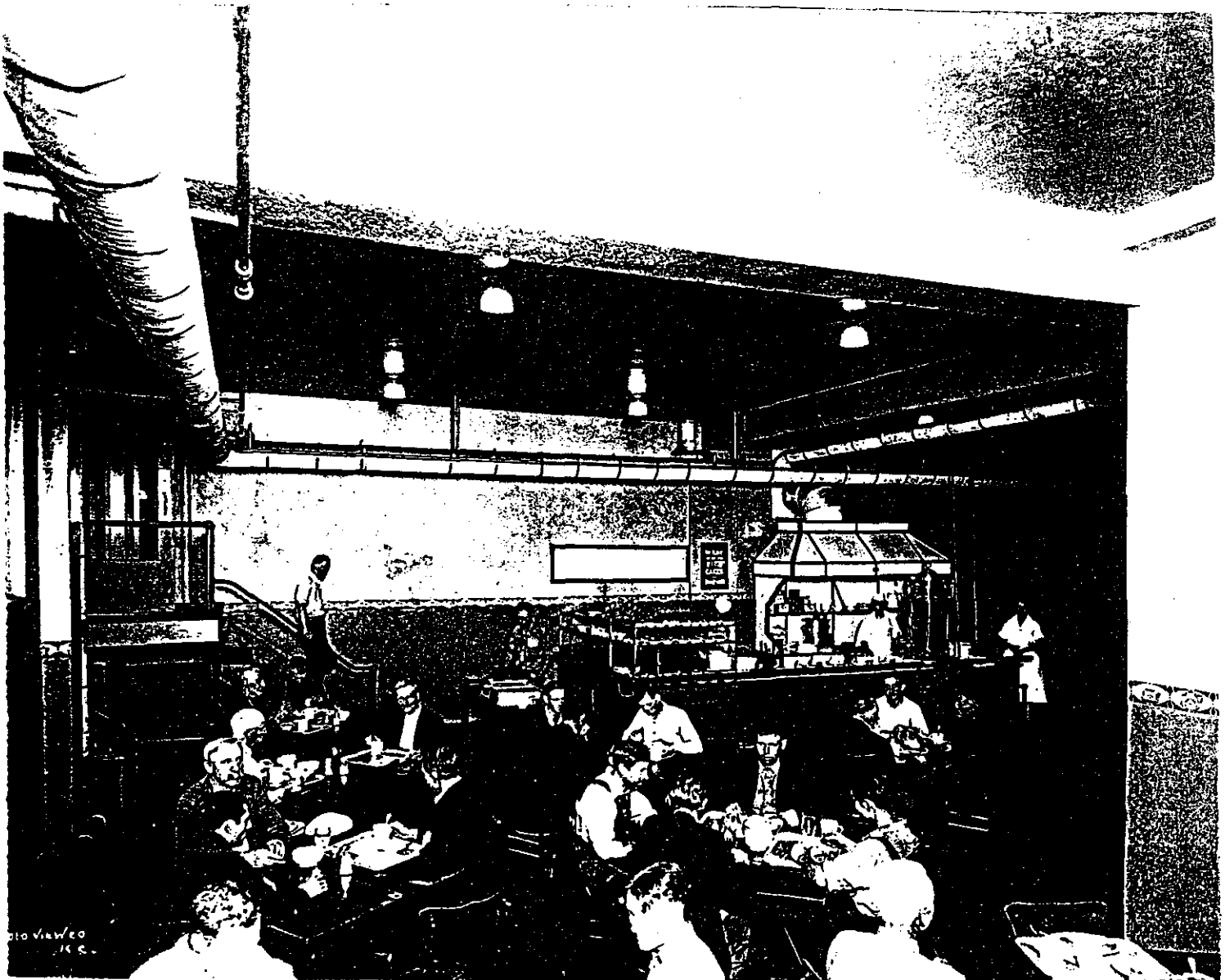
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The Helping Hand Institute, Cafeteria, ca. 1930



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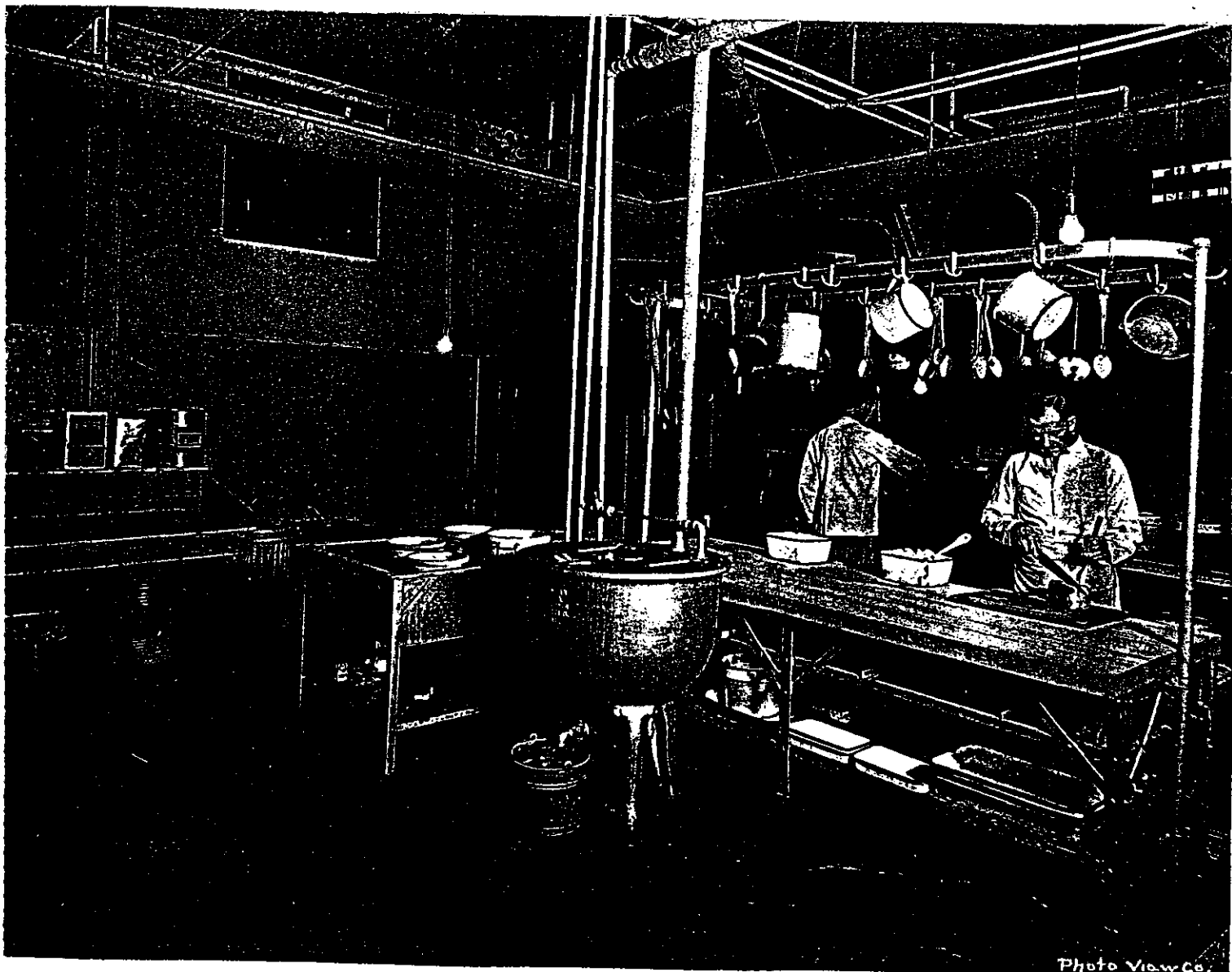
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The Helping Hand Institute, Kitchen, 1934



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The Helping Hand Institute, Christmas Dinner, 1935



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Summary

The Helping Hand Institute, 523 Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and is locally significant in the following area: SOCIAL HISTORY: Established in 1894 by the Reverend Banner E. Shawhan, the Helping Hand Institute became one of the largest and most prominent "settlement houses" in Kansas City, providing food, shelter, medical care, personal aid, counseling and employment for homeless men throughout its history. Helping Hand's first and only building ever erected gave the institution the means to offer a program of human rehabilitation, both materially and spiritually from its location at 523 Grand Boulevard. Registrants at Helping Hand from 1915, at the time of the official opening of the Grand facility, to 1950 numbered more than 435,000 individuals. Although Helping Hand was largely self-sufficient financially, the benefactions of philanthropists such as Kansas Citian William Volker were vital to its continued and successful operation. The period of significance of the Helping Hand Institute is 1915 to 1950, the end date established by the arbitrary fifty-year limit.

Elaboration

A Brief History of Social Welfare in Kansas City

Social welfare has a long tradition in Kansas City. Beginning in the 1860s, many organizations were operated in connection with an ethnic group or a church, including The Jewish Relief Society, The Shamrock Benevolent Society of the Irish, and later, the Hebrew Ladies' Relief Society (former Jewish Relief Society). In 1870, the first

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privately owned agency, The Women's Christian Temperance Union, was opened to accommodate homeless women by offering shelter and general assistance. The Union also served as an informal employment office.¹ Ten years later as society's needs changed the number of benevolent agencies increased. In the 1880s Little Sisters of the Poor opened a home for the aged, the Kansas City Provident Association gave assistance in the form of education, and St. Vincent de Paul and House of the Good Shepherd opened their doors to those in need. Other organizations operating during the last decades of the 19th century included the YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Women's Christian Association. By the 1880s there were approximately 482 separate relief groups in Kansas City.²

With a collapse in the real estate boom in Kansas City during the 1880s and the nationwide depression of 1893, more and more people were unemployed and many were homeless. Several of the area's organizations supplying relief were unable to continue their operations because they could not handle the increasing needs of the overwhelming number of those who were out of work and destitute. Some organizations consolidated their efforts, while others simply closed their doors. It was during the late 19th century in Kansas City history that a new category of aid developed. As a consequence of the rising needs of the poor and homeless, the "social settlement house" became a necessary part of the city's welfare programs.³ The settlement house provided baths, food and shelter for the unemployed and homeless men, women, and children. Five

¹ Schirmer, Sherry Lamb and Richard D. McKinzie, *At the River's Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City, Independence and Jackson County* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1982), 203-17.

² Landmarks Commission, Kansas City, Missouri. "Historic Resources Survey Plan for Kansas City." September 1992, 96.

³ Schirmer and McKinzie, *At the River's Bend*, 210.

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such "houses" were opened in a twelve-year period.⁴ Organizations like the YMCA, Provident Association, and the Helping Hand Institute required a person to be employed before they were given shelter.

In 1899 Kansas City combined its relief efforts under one administration because it became increasingly more difficult for a charity organization to raise the necessary funds to handle caring for the poor. The Associated Charities Committee of Kansas City was organized in order to reach a unified goal of providing assistance through funds administration.⁵ As a result of this effort, twenty-five organizations came under its umbrella to provide help to the needy. By the 1930s, Associated Charities was under the administration of the Chamber of Commerce where funds were distributed to a specific organization on a "by needs" scale. Each organization outlined their services and the committee would then distribute the funds annually as a variable percentage of the total operational fund. One organization that was to become a long time partner in the effort to give aid to the poor of Kansas City was the Helping Hand Institute.

The Development and History of the Helping Hand Institute, Kansas City, Missouri

In 1894, The Helping Hand Institute was organized by the Reverend Banner E. Shawhan in the Methodist Episcopal Church to aid destitute people in the north area of Kansas City. Rev. Shawhan served as superintendent at Helping Hand's first building operated at 4th and Main where he and his wife lived on the premises to provide round-the-clock

⁴ Schirmer and McKinzie, *At the River's Bend*, 210-17.

⁵ Landmarks Commission, *Historic Resources Survey Plan*, 96

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assistance.⁶ The Institute's primary concern was providing food and temporary shelter for the homeless in Kansas City at the turn-of-the-century. As a result of their successful operations, Helping Hand became one of the largest "settlement houses" in the Kansas City area.

Edwin Terry Brigham, who was to become another key player in the history of Helping Hand, arrived in Kansas City from Kirksville, Missouri, at the time of the institute's establishment. Brigham, a printer by trade, came to Kansas City for employment. Familiar with Rev. Shawhan, he sought him out for advice. Subsequently, Brigham was hired as a "Gospel assistant" to the Reverend and was in charge of a small print shop in the basement of the Institute. He was given room and board in exchange for his services. During the day, Brigham worked as a printer for Charles A. Broom Printing Company, and in the evening he worked for Helping Hand.⁷ In 1896 Brigham wed Bessie, who joined him in his work at the Helping Hand.⁸ After Rev. Shawhan left Kansas City in 1898, Brigham was named superintendent of Helping Hand, with Bessie as his assistant. Brigham remained in that position until his death on July 5, 1950.

The work of the Institute was founded in a progressive philosophy. Shawhan believed that "the only thing better than charity was employment."⁹ Helping Hand kept the need

⁶ *The Kansas City Journal*, December 25, 1902, n.p. (Mounted Clippings, Special Collections, Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.)

⁷ Over the years, Brigham was responsible for the design and printing of the brochures that were produced and used for advertising the services of Helping Hand, as well as petitioning for donations. Brigham also printed the prayer books and hymnals used in the gospel services held in Helping Hand's chapel.

⁸ Bessie's maiden name was not mentioned in any of the research on Helping Hand to date.

⁹ Pamphlet published by the Helping Hand Institute ca. 1897. Archives of the Helping Hand of Goodwill, 1817 Campbell Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

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for "soup kitchen" lines to a minimum in Kansas City, partly due to the fact that food and shelter were provided for men willing to help themselves. In order to receive shelter, a man was required to do everything possible, with the aid of the Helping Hand, to find gainful employment.

One way in which Helping Hand raised operational funds was to function as a short-term employment clearinghouse for Kansas City businesses. In doing so, Helping Hand would supply work forces for area businesses in jobs such as cracking stone, chopping and delivering wood, and general farm labor. These were contract jobs that supplied Helping Hand with steady revenue. As a result, Helping Hand would, in turn, give the workers a stipend, which could then be cashed in for room and board. An average of two days of work through Helping Hand would supply the men with enough in credit for a full week of room and board, leaving the remainder of the week free to search for employment. This system allowed for an employer to receive additional labor, income for Helping Hand, and a room, bath, clean clothing, food and higher self-esteem for the laborer.

Originally housed in the Grand Avenue M. E. Church in 1894, Helping Hand quickly relocated to the site of a former saloon at 408 Main Street. In December 1902 the building was purchased through donor subscription and the deed was turned over ". . . in fee, free from all debt," to the Helping Hand Institute. The list of prominent Kansas City donors included the Armour Packing Company; Burnham, Hanna, Munger Dry Goods Company; John Deere Plow Company; Fidelity Trust; William Volker and Company; and *The Kansas City Journal*.¹⁰

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As the organization grew a building at 410 Main was acquired in 1907 for housing both men and women on segregated floors. By 1909, the Institute was looking for a more accommodating space and considered selling their facility at 408 Main.

As a fundraiser, Terry Brigham was adept at asking for donation subscriptions or in soliciting work for men staying at the Helping Hand Institute. It was also the job of the board members to solicit help from the public. During a fund raising campaign in 1902 Brigham met William Volker, a wealthy Kansas City businessman and philanthropist (see biography below). By 1907, the first year that the board was increased from ten to fifteen members, Volker had become a member of the Helping Hand Board of Directors. Through the efforts of Volker the first Municipal Department of Public Welfare (in Kansas City) was established in the United States. As a consequence, Kansas City became a partner in the administration of funds for the city's charitable organizations.

Besides housing the poor of Kansas City's own residents, the Helping hand Institute was also the center for a transient seasonal work force. Men that were temporarily employed in farming often needed a place to stay in-between jobs while women needing shelter were not overlooked.¹¹ A house at 1703 Jefferson Street was purchased and set for the care of single women and mothers with children. Even the sick and infirm were recipients of the benevolence of the Helping Hand. No one in true need was ever turned away.

¹⁰ *The Kansas City Journal*, December 25, 1902, n.p. (Mounted Clippings, Special Collections, Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri).

¹¹ In 1913 a building at 401 Wyandotte leased to Helping Hand that housed transient men was severely damaged by fire.

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A New Home for The Helping Hand Institute

As the need for housing space increased, the Institute looked toward building a new facility to fit their special requirements. A statement of yearly registration of "different men" demonstrates the dire need for a new location. From 1899 to 1908, Helping Hand supplied shelter for an average of 5,042 men. In the years 1909 to 1918 the figure was well over an average of 8,000 annually. In January 1913, a "social betterment fund raiser" was organized and administered by the Associated Charities of Kansas City and the Department of Public Welfare where the benefits were to be divided between the YMCA and Helping Hand Institute. A total of \$225,000 was raised, of which \$100,000 was placed into the building fund for The Helping Hand.¹²

Over the next eight months, Brigham was instructed by the Board of Directors to begin looking for suitable lots for a new Helping Hand building and in March 1913, he reported on three possible building sites. According to the Minutes of the Board of Directors', Site "A" was a middle lot between Admiral and Locust. The purchase price was \$16,000 in cash plus exchange of the building at 408 Main, bringing the total acquisition costs to \$41,000. The sale price for site for lot "B" at the corner of Grand and Missouri Ave, was \$20,000, in addition to the 408 Main building, bringing the total cost of the property to \$45,000. The lot on Missouri and Grand avenues was larger at roughly \$0.14 per square foot. The third option was the Armour Building located at Fifth and Delaware. It was a

¹²The Kansas City Times, March 5, 1913, n.p. (Mounted Clippings, Special Collections, Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri).

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straight cash purchase price of \$45,000, but because the facility was in need of extensive remodeling, it was quickly eliminated.¹³

The Board of Directors was not immediately satisfied with Brigham's suggestions. In January 1914, open bids for possible sites were advertised in *The Kansas City Times*. Bids were to be submitted by January 20, 1914, covering the area of land between 3rd and 9th Streets and from Wyandotte to Locust. Corner lots were preferred. By January 29, 1914, thirty bids had been received.

It was finally determined that the lot at the northeast corner of Grand and Missouri avenues was an appropriate site of the new building for the Helping Hand Institute. The real estate brokerage firm of Tillhof & Campbell offered the lot for a total purchase price of \$38,000.¹⁴ Helping Hand received \$20,000 for the exchange of the 408 Main building, leaving a balance of \$18,000 payable in cash. The deal was quickly accepted and closed. Subsequently, Helping Hand concentrated on hiring an architect and a contractor for the new facility. At a meeting on July 31, 1914, in the offices of the YMCA, members of the Board of the Helping Hand discussed bids received from the following Kansas City architectural firms: George Fuller Green, Owen and Payson, James Oliver Hogg, and Smith, Rea & Lovitt. The minutes, listing the bids, read:

¹³ Board of Directors. Minutes. Archives of the Helping Hand Institute, 1817 Campbell Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

¹⁴ Tillhof and Campbell. Letter to the Helping Hand Institute dated June 5, 1914, inserted in the Minutes of the Helping Hand Board of Directors. The letter also stated that with the exchange of the 408 Main building, the Institute would continue to rent the building until the new facility on Grand Avenue was completed. The deal was approved by the Board and accepted by the new owners.

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The bid of Owen and Payson for drawing plans and superintending construction was for 3% of the cost of the building, or \$2,900.00. The bid of Smith Rea & Lovitt were outlined as follows: to prepare plans and supervise construction totaling \$2,750.00; an additional bid to prepare plans for \$1,750.00 and to supervise construction for \$1,000.00.

James Oliver Hogg proposed to prepare plans and supervise construction was the same as Owen & Payson, 3% of the cost of the building, or approximately \$2900.00. The bid of George Fuller Green for drawing plans and superintending building was for 5% of the cost of the building or \$4200.00. He offered in an accompanying letter a contribution of \$1000.00, should his bid be accepted.

The motion that was unanimously adopted read as follows:

Resolved: That the firm of Smith, Rea & Lovitt architects be employed to draw plans for the new building in conformity with their offer of \$1750.00 and that George Fuller Green be proffered the work of supervising the construction at a compensation of \$1000.00"¹⁵

The prominent Kansas City architectural firm of Smith, Rea & Lovitt designed the fireproof structure of reinforced concrete and brick with cement floors, and a sprinkler system. Other features of the new structure included an employment office, apartments with showers, private laundry facilities with a clothing and shoe repair room, and two

¹⁵ Minutes, July 31, 1914.

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dining areas; one for men who received meals in exchange for food, and another called a working man's café.¹⁶ A baggage room, similar to that of a hotel, was located near the check-in desk. A large modern kitchen was installed where produce from the Helping Hands farm operations were put into service. Besides office space needed for administrative work, a library and reading room were planned and implemented, along with an auditorium with a capacity for five hundred people. An infirmary, operated twenty-four hours a day, was located on the lower level. The upper floors were arranged for expansion. On September 1, 1915 the new Helping Hand Institute Building was ready for occupancy.¹⁷

Many Kansas Citians subscribed to donations for the building of the new Helping Hand. Dr. W. A. Wilson donated \$1,000.00 worth of equipment for the infirmary. Furnishings that could be salvaged from 408 Main were cleaned, painted, and given new upholstery. While most of the revenue came from the building fund raised in 1913, there were still loans taken out by the Board, usually at very low interest rates and given renewable status. Anonymous gifts were also given to the Institute. Often these gifts were by way of a bank draft from men who had greatly benefited from Helping Hand.¹⁸

¹⁶The Kansas City Times, November 15, 1914, n.p. (Mounted Clippings, Special Collections, Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.)

¹⁷ Room for 100 women and children were planned in an isolated section of the second floor but were never utilized. The Jefferson Home, 308 Garfield, was occupied by single women and women with children and was expanded in the 1920s.

¹⁸ The Helping Hand Institute continued to operate as a business for many years. From every dollar spent, Helping Hand earned an average of sixty-six cents from its' business holdings. Approximately twenty-five percent of the Institute's income came from the Community Chest. The balance of about nine percent came from trust funds set up in the name of Helping Hand Institute, funded through private donations.

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The Helping Hand Institute was involved in two businesses that generated additional income for their facility. The Industrial Paper Stock Company processed old paper goods into cardboard.¹⁹ Administred in conjunction with the City of Kansas City, Missouri, the other venture was a quarry business that supplied labor for breaking stone into pavement-quality rock. Typically, the quarried rock became property of the Institute. Helping Hand would resell the stone to Kansas City, who would then use the stone for the pavement of the boulevards. Private companies also bought the stone to be used in the construction of piers, walls, and pavement. One of the most significant jobs for which Helping Hand supplied manpower involved breaking and clearing stone for the building of Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium.²⁰ The laborers benefited by receiving room and board, the Institute received payment for a service and Kansas City benefited by getting free rock.²¹

Additional funds for Helping Hand occurred when the United States government came into partnership with the institution twice during the war years. In both instances, the government needed emergency housing for transient workers. During WWI, Helping Hand received federal funding in the amount of \$45.00 per month for each man that was supplied accommodations. Before WWII, from August 1933 until March 1, 1936, the Federal government paid Helping

¹⁹ Minutes, July 18, 1919. At a later date, the Institute decided to sell the paper business to get out from some serious debts in the years following World War II.

²⁰ A letter was received from the City Commissioners office informing Helping Hand that they would be paid for labor, but the stone was to remain property of the city. Helping Hand needed money at this time and was forced to seek loans to complete their fiscal years obligations. Minutes, November (n.d.), 1917.

²¹ By March 1932, Helping Hand had an oversupply of rock. They distributed a postcard advertising a debt of over \$7,000 as a result of a job for the Kansas City Terminal Railroad.

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Hand a total of \$362,728.70 in compensation for services rendered.

After years of continued success, Helping Hand Institute merged with Goodwill Industry to become the Helping Hand of Goodwill in 1978. By that time the need for housing transients and out-of-work men dropped drastically. By 1979, there were less than a dozen men living at Helping Hand. After sixty-seven years of operation at 5th and Grand, the Helping Hand Institute Building was sold in December 1982 for \$220,500.

William Volker and The Helping Hand Institute

Perhaps the best known of all donors throughout the history of the Helping Hand Institute was William Volker. Volker's name first appeared in relation to Helping Hand in a *Kansas City Journal* article, dated Dec. 25, 1902. Along with hundreds of other local businesses, Volker participated in a fundraiser to purchase the original site of Helping Hand at 408 Main Street. He later set up a trust fund for Helping Hand in which he deposited a monthly amount of \$50.00; later this amount increased to \$250.00 per month. Beside donations of money, Volker gave property to Helping Hand.²²

Volker served on the Board of Directors for the Helping Hand Institute from April 1907 until his death in November 1947. His forty years of service to the Board of Directors was one of great benefit to the Institute. Not only was Helping Hand fortunate to have Volker's financial

²² Although numerous gifts are attributed to his generosity, details of his contributions are sketchy. He preferred privacy above notoriety and Terry Brigham made sure that the Helping Hand honored his wishes.

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support, but his business acumen was perhaps of equal worth.

Volker's assistance with the purchase of the site for the Helping Hand Institute on Grand Avenue is somewhat sketchy. According to the Board minutes, all proceeds for the purchase and construction of the Grand Avenue building came from the building fund raised in 1913. However, Volker did donate several other properties to Helping Hand. One of the properties became the new home of the Industrial Paper Stock Company, the paper business owned by Helping Hand (as described above).

German-born William Volker was one of Kansas City's wealthiest businessmen. A home furnishings tycoon, Volker relocated the Chicago picture frame business, where he worked as a youth and later purchased, to Kansas City in 1882. Shortly after his marriage to Rose Maude Roebke, fifty-two year old Volker arranged for a million dollar trust in her name. When she asked why he had done so, he told her that it was for her to take care of him in his old age for the rest of his money he was about to donate to a number of charities. When Volker died at the age of eighty-eight in 1947, he had donated more than ten million dollars over the course of thirty-six years. Along with the Helping Hand Institute, Research Hospital, the Board of Education and the University of Missouri were among Volker's major beneficiaries.²³

²³ Herbert C. Cornuelle. *Mr. Anonymous* (Caxton, Idaho: n.p., 1951); Archives, Helping Hand Institute, Kansas City, Missouri; *The Kansas City Journal*, *The Kansas City Star* and *The Kansas City Times* (Mounted Clippings, Special Collections, Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri); Wilda Sandy. *Here Lies Kansas City* (Kansas City: Bennett Schneider, Inc., 1984), 155.

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The Architectural Firm of Smith, Rea and Lovitt

In 1910, Charles A. Smith, the renowned Kansas City architect who retained the position as the official architect for the Kansas City school board for thirty-eight years, joined in practice with Charles Rea and Walter Lovitt to form the firm of Smith, Rea & Lovitt. The firm was active for twelve years (with Lovitt dying in 1920 and Rea in 1921), and was responsible for a number of large commercial designs. Among those were the Hewson Building, 1016 Walnut (1912; demolished), with its elegantly articulated façade of terra cotta; the Firestone Building, 2001 Grand Boulevard (1915); the prestigious Kansas City Club, 1228 Baltimore (1918); and the original Hereford Association Building (later to become the Ararat Temple, 300 West 11th Street, completed in 1920. In addition, the firm designed the Bryant Elementary School, 319 Westover Road, in 1915.

Additional buildings and properties used by The Helping Hand Institute

- *308 Garfield*

The Jefferson Home for Women. In 1927, 30 rooms were added to the rear of the home.

- *533 Grand Avenue*

The Helping Hand Institute used this facility from World War I until the 1970's.

- *506 Walnut Street*

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- *The New Nelson Building, Missouri Avenue and Main Street*

Donated by William Volker in April 1932.

- *2nd and Wyandotte*

This was the location of the Old Grand Central Railway Passenger Station of the Kansas City Southern Railroad. It was used as a warehouse for the railroad prior to deeding the property to the Helping Hand Institute. When it was replaced by Union Station, The Helping Hand Institute put many men to work dismantling the 1880's facility.

- *12 miles east of North Kansas City*

In 1933 William Volker donated a 350-acre tract of ground along the Missouri River Bottoms to the Helping Hand Institute. The property was put to immediate use as a farm where the Institute could raise its own vegetables. In 1934, the government leased part of the property to provide shelter and work for transients in a cooperative effort during the Depression.

- *Turnham Homestead of Clay County.*

In June of 1934, William Volker deeded this property located south of Liberty Missouri to the Institute. It was a 1200-acre farm with a three-story farmhouse. The location provided more jobs for the Institute, as well as a producing farm operation that could accommodate sixty men.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the NE corner of Missouri Avenue and Grand Boulevard proceed east 100 feet to the center of an alley running north and south, then north 105 feet, then west 100 feet to the east side of Grand, then 105 feet south to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with The Helping Hand Institute Building.

Photographs

(Photographer: Cydney E. Millstein. All negatives are the property of Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C., Kansas City, Missouri.)

Date of photography: October 1999; January 2000.

1. West and south façades; view looking northeast.
2. Detail of main entrance, west façade; view looking east.
3. West and north façades; view looking southeast.
4. South façade and a portion of the east façade; view looking southeast.
5. East façade; view looking west, northwest.
6. North façade; view looking southwest.
7. North façade; view looking south.
8. The Library; view facing north.
9. The Chapel; view facing north.

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EXTRA
PHOTOS

